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January 1853. During his long connexion with the Society he had the good fortune to witness several of the most interesting astronomical phenomena of last century. In 1866 he observed the shower of *Leonid* meteors, and sent a brief description to the Society. He observed the transit of *Venus* at Luxor on the 12th of December 1874, Sir William Abney and Dr. Auwers being at the same station. A short account of an aurora borealis seen at Ilfracombe, given by him in the *Monthly Notices* for November 1870, is interesting from the remark: "During all my Arctic voyaging I never witnessed in any aurora the same conditions of varied colouring as were displayed on this occasion."

Admiral Ommanney died on the 21st of December 1904 at the residence of his son, St. Michael's Vicarage, Portsmouth.

WILLIAM MONTGOMERY PIERSON, of San Francisco, was a lawyer of prominence in California. He was born in 1842, and after receiving the ordinary education of the State schools was admitted to practise law before he attained his majority, a special Act of the State Legislature being passed expressly for the purpose. He became law partner of Henry H. Haight, afterwards Governor of California. Notwithstanding an active business life, he found time to devote to astronomy, and was well known on the Pacific coast as an excellent amateur astronomer. He took a prominent part in the formation of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific, and was chosen as Vice-President, succeeding Dr. Holden as President. Till his death he remained on the Board of Directors, the Finance and Comet Medal Committees. He fitted out at his own expense an expedition to observe the total solar eclipse in India in 1898. This expedition was directed by Professor Burckhalter, who used a rotating occulting plate to obtain an exposure of suitable length in different parts of the corona. In 1903 he presented his 8-inch reflector to the University of California. His loss was deeply felt by many American astronomers belonging to the Astronomical Society of the Pacific. He died in November 1904. Mr. Pierson was elected a Fellow of the Society on the 9th of January 1891.

EYRE BURTON POWELL, M.A., C.S.I., was for many years Director of Public Instruction in the Madras Presidency. He was one of the oldest Fellows of the Society, being elected on the 13th of January 1854. He had a small refractor in the grounds of the Government Native College at Madras, and frequently observed comets, double stars, &c., working in co-operation with Captain Jacob, the Hon. East India Company's Astronomer. His first contribution to the Society's publications is in 1854, when he communicated a series of observations of Comet II. of that year and a determination of its elements, and pointed out that these agreed with those of a comet observed in 1677 by Hevelius. In 1856 he forwarded to the Society his observations of 130 double stars made in the years 1853–4–5. These are published in vol.

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xxv. of the *Memoirs.* As he had not a clockwork movement and his instrument was not a powerful one, he confined himself wholly to the observation of position-angles. From 1853–61 he made observations of the nebula round η *Argûs*, and of the variation in the brightness of η *Argûs* itself. Observations of double stars made by him at Madras in the years 1859–62 are given in vol. xxxii. of the *Memoirs*, and his observations of later date are to be found in *Monthly Notices* for November 1883. He also contributed several computations of the orbit of α *Centauri*, the first being in 1854 and the last in 1892.

Mr. Powell died at his residence at Streatham on the 10th of November 1904 at the age of 85 years.

Dr. Walter John Bruce Richards was a distinguished priest of the Roman Catholic Church and an intimate friend of Cardinal Manning and Cardinal Vaughan. Born in 1835, he was ordained priest in 1859, and was in 1870 appointed by Cardinal Manning Diocesan Inspector of Schools. The main work of his life was educational, and his duties brought him into frequent contact with educationalists outside his own communion. He was chosen to serve on a Royal Commission on Poor Laws and Industrial Schools.

Dr. Richards's interest in astronomy was especially in the field of selenography. He was one of the original members of the Selenographical Society and a contributor to its *Journal*, which was issued from 1878 to 1882. The *Journal* was discontinued, and the Society practically came to an end when Mr. Neison (Nevill) left England for Natal. Dr. Richards also contributed monthly articles on lunar work to the *Astronomical Register* from 1881 to 1883, containing notes on lunar formations and suggestions for observation.

He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society on the 11th of February 1876. He died in September 1904.

Isaac Roberts was born at Groes, near Denbigh, North Wales, on the 27th of January 1829; before his childhood was over, however, the family removed to Liverpool, and in that city the greater part of his long life was spent. His parents were not well to do, his father being a farmer, and later a bookkeeper; and after receiving an elementary education he was set to work in the building trade: in this he prospered greatly, becoming ultimately a partner in a large firm of contractors, with ample means for the prosecution of his scientific researches.

His taste for these was shown in early days when as a builder's apprentice he attended evening courses on scientific subjects; but he had entered his fiftieth year before his first astronomical telescope was mounted. This was a 7-inch refractor, and was followed by a reflector of 20 inches aperture and 98 inches focal length for photographic purposes: the two telescopes were mounted on the same declination axis and were moved

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